



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday June 6, 2005

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OCEAN INTERESTS COME TOGETHER TO HONOR ADMIRAL JAMES D. WATKINS WITH THE SENATOR JOHN H. CHAFEE COASTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Participants discuss the President's Ocean Action Plan during an afternoon symposium

Leaders from Congress, President Bush's Administration, federal agencies, local and state governments, and environmental organizations came together on June 6 during Capitol Hill Oceans Week to honor Admiral James D. Watkins, USN (Ret.), for his leadership of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

The participants gathered in the Senate Caucus Room for a reception in honor of Admiral Watkins. James L. Connaughton, Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, presented Admiral Watkins with the Senator John H. Chafee Coastal Stewardship Award, which recognizes "a person who, whether in government, the private sector, or academia, has consistently displayed outstanding leadership of national significance related to restoring and protecting our nation's coastal resources."

Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska participated in the award presentation and spoke about the contributions of Admiral Watkins and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy to the ocean and coastal community: "The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, under the leadership of Admiral Watkins, has provided our Nation with a blueprint for managing our oceans and coasts for the next century. Thanks are certainly due to the Admiral and the Ocean Commission for their diligent work."

Senator Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island also participated in the presentation of the award to Admiral Watkins: "I am delighted that the Senator John H. Chafee Coastal Stewardship Award is being presented to Admiral Watkins for his tireless leadership in addressing our most important resource concerns. This is an issue that my father was deeply passionate about, and I am proud to take part in recognizing Admiral Watkins for being a champion for our coastal environment."

Admiral Watkins served as Chairman of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and led the effort to develop a consensus on "An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century". His former positions include serving as: President of the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE);

President of the Joint Oceanographic Institutions (JOI); Chief of Naval Operations; and Secretary of the Department of Energy.

Graciously accepting the award, Admiral Watkins reiterated his commitment to a positive future for our Nation's ocean and coastal areas: "I am so pleased to accept the Senator John H. Chafee Stewardship Award, and I would like to share this great honor with all those who worked so diligently on the Ocean Commission report. Discussions such as the one we heard today at the Symposium are key to moving our country forward in terms of managing our oceans. It is important that we act now, and I urge the Administration, Congress, the Governors and private organizations to capitalize on this historic opportunity to make positive and lasting changes in the way we manage our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes."

Prior to the evening reception, Chairman Connaughton hosted a symposium on progress achieved in the implementation of the U.S. Ocean Action Plan. The Plan is the Administration's formal response to the work of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, a 16 member presidentially-appointed independent commission that made recommendations for a comprehensive, integrated national ocean policy. During the Symposium, leaders from the federal government, state government, environmental organizations and the private sector reviewed progress in the areas of science, management and governance of our Nation's marine and aquatic areas.

According to Chairman Connaughton, "The U.S. Ocean Action Plan lays out a range of federal actions that our government is undertaking to more effectively manage our ocean and coastal resources. We have made a great deal of progress thus far. There is also much more to do. Discussions such as the one we are having today are integral to advancing the next generation of ocean and coastal policy."

The Symposium and Reception were organized, on behalf of the White House, by Coastal America, a partnership among federal, state and local governments and private alliances to address environmental problems along our Nation's coasts. Over the last twelve years, Coastal America partners have worked with more than 1000 organizations to develop hundreds of coastal restoration and protection projects throughout the United States. The Partnership has restored hundreds of thousands of wetland acres, re-opened thousands of miles of streams for anadromous fish, and protected habitat for threatened fish, birds, and mammals. Coastal America's partners include 12 federal agencies and the Executive Office of the President, as well as state and local governments, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, and the private sector.

About Coastal America:

Coastal America is a partnership among federal, state and local governments and the private sector to protect, preserve and restore the Nation's coastal ecosystems through collaborative action. The federal partners are: the Departments of Agriculture, Air Force, Army, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Navy, State, and Transportation; the Environmental Protection Agency; and the Executive Office of the President.

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